

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) In a computer environment including a plurality of applications that operate on data related to an identity, the computer environment also including a service that maintains data associated with the identity, a method for one of the plurality of applications to operate on data related to the identity, the method comprising the following:

identifying data associated with an identity, which is maintained by a service independent of an application seeking to operate on the data as a data object organized into a data structure according to a schema recognized by a number of different applications and the service, wherein control over access privileges associated with the data is retained by the identity such that the identity can grant or retract authorizations by modifying ~~authorization~~ access control data in the data structure;

formulating a request to operate on the data, wherein formulating the request includes:

an act of constructing a network message in accordance with a message format that is recognized by the service, the network message representing a request to perform the operation on the data structure, wherein the network message includes an identification of the identity and an identification of a schema associated with the data structure; and

an act of dispatching the network message to the service.

Claim 2. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises dispatching the network message directly to the service without first communicating with a locator service.

Claim 3. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the data structure comprises a content data structure that represents the actual data of interest.

Claim 4. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the data structure comprises an access control data structure.

Claim 5. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the data structure comprises a systems data structure.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the data that is to be operated on is not directly accessed by the plurality of applications, but is only directly accessed via the service.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1, further comprising:

an act of granting the application access to the data structure prior to the acts of identifying, constructing, and dispatching, wherein the decision on whether or not to grant the application access is based on permissions provided by the identity.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with Claim 1, further comprising:

an act of revoking access from the application to the data structure after the acts of identifying, constructing, and dispatching, wherein the decision on whether or not to revoke access is based on permissions provided by the identity.

Claim 9. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, further comprising the following:

an act of determining an address of the service.

Claim 10. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the act of constructing a network message comprises the following:

an act of including the address of the service in the network message.

Claim 11. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the network message is a first network message, wherein the act of determining an address of the service comprises the following:

an act of constructing a second network message in accordance with the message format that is recognized by a locator service, the second network message representing a query for the address using the identification of the identity;

an act of dispatching the second network message to the locator service; and

an act of receiving a response from the locator service that includes the address.

Claim 12. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the act of receiving a response from the locator service comprises the following:

an act of receiving a third network message from the locator service, the third network message being in accordance with the message format.

Claim 13. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of constructing a network message in accordance with a message format that is recognized by the service comprises the following:

an act of constructing a network message in accordance with the Simple Object Access Protocol.

Claim 14. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises the following:

an act of dispatching the network request to a locator service that maintains a list of addresses for type-specific data services corresponding to the identity.

Claim 15. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises the following:

an act of dispatching the network request to a type-specific data service that maintains a list of addresses for type-specific data services corresponding to the identity.

Claim 16. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises the following:

an act of dispatching the network message to the service using a transport protocol that is compatible with transport over the Internet.

Claim 17. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises the following:

an act of dispatching the network message to a different machine as compared to the machine that runs the application.

Claim 18. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the act of dispatching the network message to the service comprises the following:

an act of dispatching the network message to a service that is run on the same machine as the application.

Claim 19. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the identity is an individual.

Claim 20. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the identity is a group of individuals.

Claim 21. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the identity is an organization.

Claims 22-23. (Cancelled).

Claim 24. (Original) A computer program product for use in a computer environment including a plurality of applications that operate on data related to an identity, the computer environment also including a service that maintains data associated with the identity, the computer program product for implementing a method for one of the plurality of applications to operate on data related to the identity, the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable media having stored thereon the following:

computer-executable instructions for implementing the method recited in claim 1.

Claim 25. (Original) A computer program product in accordance with Claim 24, wherein the one or more computer-readable media are physical storage media.

Claim 26. (Original) A computer program product in accordance with Claim 24, wherein the one or more computer-readable media further have stored thereon the following:

computer-executable instructions for constructing a second network message in accordance with the message format that is recognized by a locator service, the second network message representing a query for the address using the identification of the identity;

computer-executable instructions for causing the second network message to be dispatched to the locator service; and

computer-executable instructions for detecting the receipt of a response from the locator service that includes the address.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) In a computer environment including a plurality of applications that operate on data related to an identity, the computer environment also including a service that maintains data associated with the identity, a method for the service facilitating access of the plurality of applications to data related to the identity, the method comprising the following:

an act of receiving a network message from one of the plurality of applications, the network message structured in accordance with a message format that is recognized by the service, the network message representing a request to operate on data maintained by the service independent of the one of the plurality of applications as a data structure associated with the identity, wherein the data structure is organized into the data structure according to a schema recognized by the plurality of applications and the service, wherein the data belongs to the associated identity and wherein the identity retains control over access privileges of the plurality of applications to the data by granting or retracting authorizations by modifying access controlauthorization data in the data structure, the network message including an identification of the identity and an identification of a schema associated with the data structure;

an act of interpreting the network message in light of the message format to thereby extract an identification of the identity and an identification of the data structure; and

an act of performing the requested operation on the data structure using the data format.

Claim 28. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with Claim 27, further comprising the following:

prior to the act of performing the requested operation, an act of determining that the one of the plurality of applications is authorized to perform the requested operation on the data structure based on permissions provided by the identity.

Claim 29. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 28, wherein:
the method further comprises an act of maintaining a list of access rights to the data structure; and
the act of determining that the one of the plurality of applications is authorized to perform the requested operation on the data structure comprises an act of referring to the list of access rights.

Claim 30. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 29, wherein the act of maintaining a list of access rights to the data structure comprises an act of honoring requests issued by the identity to control access rights to the data structure.

Claim 31. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents addresses corresponding to a plurality of type-specific data services that maintain type-specific data structures related to the identity.

Claim 32. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 31, wherein network message is a first network message, wherein the act of performing the requested operation on the data structure comprises the following:

an act of reading at least one address from the data structure;
an act of constructing a second network message that includes the at least one address read from the data structure; and
an act of dispatching the second network message.

Claim 33. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 32, wherein the act of dispatching the second network message comprises an act of dispatching the second network message to the one of the plurality of application programs.

Claim 34. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 32, wherein the act of dispatching the second network message comprises an act of dispatching the second network message in accordance with the message format.

Claim 35. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents personal address information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 36. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents contacts information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 37. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents grocery list information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 38. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents in-box information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 39. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents music service information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 40. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents calendar information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 41. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents documents that the identity is entitled to access.

Claim 42. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents application setting information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 43. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents physical device information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 44. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the data structure represents favorite Web site information corresponding to the identity.

Claim 45. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 27, wherein the network message is a first network message, wherein the act of performing the requested operation on the data structure comprises the following:

- an act of reading at least one address from the data structure;
- an act of constructing a second network message that includes the at least one address read from the data structure; and
- an act of dispatching the second network message.

Claim 46. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 45, wherein the act of dispatching the second network message comprises an act of dispatching the second network message to the one of the plurality of application programs.

Claim 47. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 45, wherein the act of dispatching the second network message comprises an act of dispatching the second network message in accordance with the message format.

Claim 48. (Original) A computer-program product for use in a computer environment including a plurality of applications that operate on data related to an identity, the computer environment also including a service that maintains data associated with the identity, the computer program product for implementing a method for the service facilitating access of the plurality of applications to data related to the identity, the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable media having stored thereon the following:

computer-executable instructions for implementing the method recited in claim 27.

Claim 49. (Original) A computer program product in accordance with Claim 48, wherein the one or more computer-readable media are physical storage media.

Claim 50. (Original) A computer program product in accordance with Claim 48, wherein the one or more computer-readable media further comprise the following:

computer-executable instructions for determining that the one of the plurality of applications is authorized to perform the requested operation on the data structure prior to the performing the requested operation.

Claim 51. (Original) A computer program product in accordance with Claim 48, wherein the one or more computer-readable media further have stored thereon the following:

computer-executable instructions for maintaining a list of access rights to the data structure; and

computer-executable instructions for referring to the list of access rights in order to determine that the one of the plurality of application is authorized to perform the requested operation on the data structure.

Claim 52. (Currently Amended) A computer network that facilitates access to identity-centric data, the computer network comprising the following:

a plurality of applications that operate on data related to an identity, wherein the data belongs to the associated identity and is organized into a data structure according to a schema recognized by the plurality of different applications, and wherein the identity retains control over access privileges of the plurality of applications to the data by granting or retracting authorizations by modifying access control~~authorization~~ data in the data structure, wherein each of the plurality of applications configured to determine that data associated with the identity is to be operated on, identify a data structure that represents the data associated with the identity, construct a network message in accordance with a message structure recognized by the plurality of applications, wherein the network message includes an identification of the identity and an identification of a schema associated with the data structure, the network message representing a request to perform the operation on the data structure, and configured to dispatch the network message to the service; and

a plurality of services that maintain data associated with the identity, each of the plurality of applications configured to detect the receipt of the network message from one of the plurality of applications, interpret the network message in light of the message format to thereby extract an identification of the identity and an identification of the data structure, and perform the requested operation on the data structure using the data format.

Claim 53. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 27, further comprising:

storing identity-centric data relating to multiple identities in a data store maintained by the service;

receiving various requests from the applications for identity-centric data relating to at least some of the identities; and

providing the requested data to the requesting applications in response to their requests.

Claim 54. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

requesting identity-centric data relating to the identity; and receiving the requested identity-centric data from the data service.

Claim 55-59. (Cancelled).